

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-55. (canceled)

56. (currently amended) A fiber node in a hybrid fiber-coax network (HFCN) located between an upstream facility and a plurality of cable modems, comprising:

a cable modem termination system (CMTS) comprising:

a transmitter to transmit data to the cable modems as downstream analog radio frequency (RF) signals over a plurality of downstream channels,

a converter to receive and digitize upstream analog RF signals from the cable modems over a plurality of upstream channels, the digitized upstream signals including first digitized signals and second digitized signals,

a receiver to;

~~receive upstream analog RF~~ the first digitized signals from the cable modems over a plurality of upstream channels and ~~converter and demodulate or decode the first digitized signals to extract data from the upstream analog RF~~ first digitized signals, and

receive the second digitized signals and packetize data from the second digitized signals without demodulating or decoding the second digitized signals, and

a processor, connected to the transmitter and the receiver, to:

provide the data to the transmitter,

receive the extracted data and the packetized data from the receiver, and

send the extracted data and the packetized data together over a packet network to the upstream facility, ~~and~~

~~dynamically allocate a downstream channel or an upstream channel during operation of the fiber node.~~

57. (previously presented) The fiber node of claim 56, wherein the transmitter includes a plurality of modulators, where each of the modulators corresponds to one of the downstream channels.

58. (previously presented) The fiber node of claim 56, wherein the receiver includes a plurality of demodulators, where each of the demodulators corresponds to one of the upstream channels.

59. (canceled)

60. (previously presented) The fiber node of claim 56, wherein the CMTS is configured to communicate data and control signals with the upstream facility via an Ethernet-compatible packet network.

61. (previously presented) The fiber node of claim 56, wherein the CMTS is configured to compress and merge the extracted data from multiple ones of the cable modems before sending the extracted data to the upstream facility.

62. (previously presented) The fiber node of claim 56, wherein the CMTS is configured to isolate multiple ones of the upstream channels, less than all of the upstream channels, and combine the extracted data from the isolated upstream channels for transmission to the upstream facility.

63. (previously presented) The fiber node of claim 62, wherein the isolated upstream channels are unrelated in function or frequency.

64. (canceled)

65. (canceled)

66. (previously presented) The fiber node of claim 56, wherein the upstream facility is an upstream hub or an upstream head end.

67. (previously presented) The fiber node of claim 56, wherein CMTS is configured to determine that there is a problem associated with one of the upstream channels or one of the downstream channels.

68. (previously presented) The fiber node of claim 67, wherein the CMTS is further configured to scan an entire spectrum associated with the one upstream channel or the one downstream channel in real time to identify a part of the spectrum that is free of the problem.

69. (previously presented) The fiber node of claim 67, wherein the CMTS is further configured to resize the one upstream channel or the one downstream channel.

70. (previously presented) The fiber node of claim 67, wherein the CMTS is further configured to dynamically increase or decrease bandwidth associated with the one upstream channel or the one downstream channel.

71. (previously presented) The fiber node of claim 67, wherein the CMTS is further configured to move the one upstream channel or the one downstream channel to a new frequency.

72. (previously presented) The fiber node of claim 67, wherein the CMTS is further configured to allocate an additional upstream channel or an additional downstream channel.

73. (previously presented) The fiber node of claim 67, wherein the CMTS is further configured to move one or more of the cable modems associated with the one upstream channel or the one downstream channel to another one of the upstream channels or another one of the downstream channels without registering the moved one or more cable modems.

74. (currently amended) A fiber node in a hybrid fiber-coax network (HFCN) located between an upstream facility and a plurality of cable modems, comprising:

a cable modem termination system (CMTS) comprising:

means for transmitting data to the cable modems as downstream analog radio frequency (RF) signals over a plurality of downstream channels,

means for receiving upstream analog RF signals from the cable modems over a plurality of upstream channels ~~and extracting data from the upstream analog RF signals,~~

means for converting the upstream analog RF signals to digitized upstream signals that include first digitized signals and second digitized signals,

means for demodulating or decoding the first digitized signals to extract data from the first digitized signals,

means for packetizing data from the second digitized signals without demodulating or decoding the second digitized signals, and
means for sending the extracted data and the packetized data over a packet network to the upstream facility ~~means for dynamically allocating a downstream channel or an upstream channel during operation of the fiber node.~~

75. (previously presented) The fiber node of claim 74, wherein the means for transmitting data includes a plurality of modulators, where each of the modulators corresponds to one of the downstream channels.

76. (currently amended) The fiber node of claim 74, wherein the means for ~~receiving upstream analog RF signals~~ demodulating or decoding the first digitized signals includes a plurality of demodulators, where each of the demodulators corresponds to one of the upstream channels.

77. (canceled)

78. (previously presented) The fiber node of claim 74, wherein the CMTS further comprises means for communicating data and control signals with the upstream facility via an Ethernet-compatible packet network.

79. (currently amended) The fiber node of claim 74, wherein the CMTS further comprises:
means for compressing and merging the extracted data from multiple ones of the cable modems, and
means for sending the compressed and merged data to the upstream facility.

80. (previously presented) The fiber node of claim 74, wherein the CMTS further comprises:
means for isolating multiple ones of the upstream channels, a number of the isolated upstream channels being less than all of the upstream channels, and
means for combining the extracted data from the isolated upstream channels for transmission to the upstream facility.

81. (previously presented) The fiber node of claim 80, wherein the isolated upstream channels are unrelated in function or frequency.

82. (canceled)

83. (canceled)

84. (previously presented) The fiber node of claim 74, wherein the upstream facility is an upstream hub or an upstream head end.

85. (currently amended) The fiber node of claim 74, wherein the CMTS further comprises means for determining that there is a problem associated with one of the upstream channels or one of the downstream channels.

86. (previously presented) The fiber node of claim 85, wherein the CMTS further comprises means for scanning an entire spectrum associated with the one upstream channel or the one downstream channel in real time to identify a part of the spectrum that is free of the problem.

87. (previously presented) The fiber node of claim 85, wherein the CMTS further comprises means for resizing the one upstream channel or the one downstream channel.

88. (previously presented) The fiber node of claim 85, wherein the CMTS further comprises means for dynamically increasing or decreasing bandwidth associated with the one upstream channel or the one downstream channel.

89. (previously presented) The fiber node of claim 85, wherein the CMTS further comprises means for moving the one upstream channel or the one downstream channel to a new frequency.

90. (previously presented) The fiber node of claim 85, wherein the CMTS further comprises means for allocating an additional upstream channel or an additional downstream channel.

91. (previously presented) The fiber node of claim 85, wherein the CMTS further comprises means for moving one or more of the cable modems associated with the one upstream channel or the one downstream channel to another one of the upstream channels or another one of the downstream channels without registering the moved one or more cable modems.

92. (currently amended) A hybrid fiber-coax network, comprising:
a cable system head end; and
a plurality of fiber nodes connected between a plurality of cable modems and the cable system head end, each of the fiber nodes comprising:

a transmitter to transmit data to the cable modems over a plurality of downstream channels,

a receiver to;

receive digitized first upstream signals from the cable modems
over a plurality of first upstream channels and demodulate or decode the
first upstream signals to extract data from the first upstream signals, and

receive a digitized second upstream signal over a second upstream channel and packetize data from the second upstream signal without demodulating or decoding the second upstream signal, and

a processor, connected to the transmitter and the receiver, to:

provide the data to the transmitter,

receive the extracted data and the packetized data from the receiver, and

send the extracted data and the packetized data to the cable system head end via a packet network, and

~~dynamically assign or configure a downstream channel or an upstream channel during operation of the fiber node.~~